

# *Environmental Assessment*

## **Norris Reservoir Land Management Plan**



September 2001





**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
NORRIS RESERVOIR LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP  
Clinch-Powell Watershed Team**

**TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY**

**September 2001**



## **NORRIS RESERVOIR LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Anderson, Campbell, Claiborne, Grainger, and Union Counties, Tennessee**

**Responsible Federal Agency:** Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

**Abstract:** TVA has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and a comprehensive Land Management Plan for the 27,927 acres and 809 shoreline miles of TVA public land above the summer pool levels on Norris Reservoir. The EA documents the analysis of alternative uses of TVA public land and their effects on the surrounding environment. TVA considered two alternatives for making land use decisions for TVA public land around Norris Reservoir. Under the No Action Alternative (Alternative A), TVA would continue to use the existing 1968 Forecast System to manage TVA public land on Norris Reservoir. The Forecast System emphasizes recreation and power plant development. Under the Allocation Alternative (Alternative B) TVA would use the Norris Reservoir Land Management Plan (Norris Plan) to manage TVA public land based on scientific, cultural, and economic principles. The Norris Plan emphasizes resource management and sensitive resource protection. The Norris Plan takes into account the comments received from the general public and various state and federal agencies, elected officials, resource conservation groups and other interested groups. The Norris Plan is intended to guide TVA resource and property management decisions for the foreseeable future. It identifies the most suitable range of uses for 315 parcels of TVA public land. Regardless of the alternative adopted by TVA, either planning strategy would be implemented consistent with the current TVA Shoreline Management Policy.

The draft EA was distributed in June 2001. TVA received forty-four sets of comments on the draft. The EA includes responses to these comments. The full EA and Norris Land Management Plan can be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.tva.gov/environment/reports/norris>.

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## Executive Summary

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) has prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) on alternative plans for the management of TVA public land around Norris Reservoir. Public involvement began in April 1999 with the publication of an article announcing that planning was underway on Norris Reservoir in *TVA River Neighbors*. Mailings were also sent to approximately 3,000 citizens notifying them of the planning process and how to get involved. Members of the public, various state and federal agencies, elected officials, resource conservation groups and other interested groups have participated in the preparation of this EA by attending two public scoping meetings in 1999: October 28 at Anderson County High School and November 2 at Lincoln Memorial University. Participation continued in 2001 during the comment period for the draft EA by attending: June 19, Friends of Norris Lake, Anderson County Chapter meeting in Norris Tennessee; June 26, Friends of Norris Lake, Campbell County Chapter meeting in LaFollette, Tennessee; July 3, Campbell Outdoor Recreation Association, meeting in LaFollette, Tennessee; July 9 Clinch-Powell Watershed Team Open House in Norris, Tennessee; and July 13 Campbell County Leadership Forum held on Norris Reservoir. Comments were also received through emails, the Norris Reservoir Land Management Plan (Norris Plan) website, 1-800 TVA LAND, and the U.S. mail.

## Alternatives

TVA considered two alternatives for making land use decisions for the TVA public land around Norris Reservoir. Under the No Action Alternative (Alternative A), TVA would continue to use the existing 1968 Forecast System. Under the Allocation Alternative (Alternative B), TVA would use the Norris Plan to guide future land use decisions.

A common feature of both alternatives is categorization of the residential shoreline. In accordance with the TVA Shoreline Management Policy (SMP) (November 1, 1998) the three categories used for residential shoreline include: Shoreline Protection, Residential Mitigation, and Managed Residential.

### Alternative A – No Action Alternative

TVA would continue to use the existing 1968 Forecast System on the Reservoir. This Forecast System allocates land into the following eleven categories:

Dam Reservation (904 acres) includes land managed to protect the integrity of the dam and associated switchyards and power lines.

Reservoir Operations (2,568 acres) includes generally, narrow bands of shoreland retained by TVA for flood control and other reservoir operations purposes. Also Reservoir Operations includes islands in the mainstream or tributaries used for informal, dispersed recreation and natural resource management projects.

Power Transmission (584 acres) includes land reserved for future power development or to maintain the integrity of existing power lines.

Public Recreation (18,050 acres) includes land set aside for use by the general public for recreational activities.

Commercial Recreation (97 acres) includes land that TVA has reserved primarily for commercial use.

Minor Commercial Landings (24 acres) includes land allocated for minor commercial landings available for public or private development of small-scale barge facilities.

Forestry Research (726 acres) includes land used as on-going sites for monitoring tree growth and stress.

Steam Plant Study (821 acres) includes land set aside to potentially serve as a future steam plant location.

TVA Small Wild Area (363 acres) includes land managed by TVA or in cooperation with other public agencies or private conservation organizations to protect exceptional natural or aesthetic qualities that can also support dispersed, low-impact types of outdoor recreation.

Wildlife Management (175 acres) includes land managed for the enhancement of natural resources for human use and appreciation.

No Forecast (3,635 acres) identifies TVA public land not included in the Forecast System.

### **Alternative B – Allocation Alternative**

Alternative B, the proposed Plan, was developed using information obtained from the public, other agencies, organizations, existing and newly collected field data, both on land conditions and resources, and technical knowledge of TVA staff. In determining proposed allocations for 315 parcels of public land, TVA considered a wide range of possible land uses. This alternative allocates land into categories that emphasize sensitive resource management (preservation and enhancement of wetlands, biodiversity, and archaeological and historic resources) and natural resource conservation. Each parcel of land was reviewed to determine its physical capability for supporting certain uses, suitability of supporting these uses, and public needs. Based on this information, TVA allocated land parcels to one of seven planning zones.

Zone 1: Non-TVA Shoreland includes shoreland located above the summer water level that TVA does not own in fee or land never purchased by TVA. This Non-TVA shoreland is subject to TVA's 26a permitting requirements. TVA is not allocating private or other non-TVA public land.

The proposed Norris Plan allocates 27,927 acres of TVA public land on the Norris Reservoir into the following six planning zones:

Zone 2: TVA Project Operations (935 acres) includes TVA reservoir land currently used for TVA operations and public works projects.

Zone 3: Sensitive Resource Management (4,839 acres) includes land managed for protection and enhancement of sensitive resources. Sensitive resources, as defined by TVA, include resources protected by state or federal law or executive order and other land features/natural resources TVA considers important to the area viewscape or natural environment. Natural resource activities such as hunting, wildlife observation, and camping on undeveloped sites may occur in this zone, but the overriding focus is protecting and enhancing the sensitive resource the site supports.



Zone 4: Natural Resource Conservation (18,937 acres) includes land managed for the enhancement of natural resources for human use and appreciation. Management of resources is the primary focus of this zone. Appropriate activities in this zone include hunting, resource management, wildlife observation, and camping on undeveloped sites.

Zone 5: Industrial/Commercial Development (0 acres) the Norris Plan has no land allocated for industrial or commercial development.

Zone 6: Recreation (1,744 acres) includes all reservoir land managed for concentrated, active recreation activities that require capital improvement and maintenance.

Zone 7: Residential (1,473 acres) includes TVA public land where Section 26a applications and other land use approvals for residential shoreline alterations are considered. Requests for residential shoreline alterations are considered on parcels identified in this zone where such use was previously considered and where the proposed use would not conflict with the interests of the general public. As provided for in the SMP, residential access would be divided into the three categories based on the presence of sensitive ecological resources.

### **Comparison of Alternatives**

Selection of Alternative A could result in some reduction in potential long-term benefits on Norris Reservoir. The Forecast System emphasizes recreation and power plant development. A major change from the existing Forecast System land designations is the creation of Zone 3 (Sensitive Resource Management); land containing sensitive resources such as protected species, wetlands, archaeological, historical, and significant visual resources are allocated to this zone in Alternative B. Under Alternative A, the resources identified for protection would be protected by individual environmental reviews of specific land use proposals. However, allocation of these resources to Zone 3 in Alternative B allows the protection of the sensitive resource to be the overriding objective for the management of a particular parcel of land, as well as providing an additional tool to better manage the potential cumulative effects which might occur to a sensitive resource. The Norris Plan emphasizes resource management and sensitive resource protection. Under Alternative B, eleven new TVA Natural Areas would be designated because of the presence of rare species or other sensitive resources. Also the existing Monks Corner Small Wild Area will be expanded by 25 acres. Other potential TVA Natural Areas would be considered during the Resource Management Unit Planning process.

### **Preferred Alternative**

TVA has selected Alternative B as the preferred alternative. Alternative B meets the desires of a majority of the members of the public and various agencies that commented on the draft EA. This alternative formulates a new and comprehensive Norris Plan for 315 parcels of TVA public land on Norris Reservoir. The proposed Norris Plan honors previous land use commitments and allocates uncommitted public land into zones that allow for a balance of development and conservation. The results of the evaluation of possible environmental effects (summarized in Section 2.3 of the EA) indicate that Alternative B would not have adverse environmental effects. It addresses the stewardship of sensitive resources and other important issues and concerns raised by citizens and other stakeholders. Selection of this alternative would be beneficial to public land and would protect current resource functions and values.

## Commitments

1. All land-disturbing activities shall be conducted in accordance with Best Management Practices (BMPs) as defined by Section 208 of the Clean Water Act and implementing regulations to control erosion and sedimentation. Forest management activities will be conducted in accordance with practices prescribed for forestry in *Best Management Practices for Silvicultural Activities on TVA Land*.
2. Visual and water quality enhancement buffers, between 50 and 100 feet Wide, will be provided to screen wildlife habitat enhancement areas from public thoroughfares and shorelines and to minimize the potential for sediments or other nonpoint source pollutants to enter Norris Reservoir.
3. Any facilities or structures subject to flood damage will be floodproofed or located above the 500-year flood elevation.
4. TVA will utilize a phased identification and evaluation approach to identify cultural resources.
5. Controlled burns will be conducted in accordance with Tennessee open burning regulations.
6. BMPs for agriculture, including maintenance of vegetative buffers, will be included in agricultural licenses as described in *Agricultural Land Licensing for 1999-2003 Crop Years - Northeast Region, Land Management*, TVA, 1999.